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By-McPherson, Hoyt; Stephens, Thomas M.

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A work experience program for educable mentally handicapped youth in special classes included 215 students, 138 of them in 11th grade (105 boys, 33 girls) and 77 in 12th grade (47 boys, 30 girls). Their mean chronological age was 18-6 years and their mean IQ was 73 with a range of 52 to 82. The program coordinator of the Ohio State Department of Special Education developed the work study program; coordinated it with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Citizens' Advisory Committee, and the Technical Advisory Committee; obtained job placement; and shared supervisory responsibilities with the teacher-counselors, who were assigned to participating schools. Of the unskilled job placements obtained, 50% were in food service areas and 30% in porter or custodial areas. Hospital placements were also recommended; service stations and domestic homes were not. The gross annual earnings of students were $118,000. Success was related to on the job supervision, and the teacher-counselor's interview with each student on pay day was important. In a followup study of 73 graduates of the special classes, 89% of the 44 who had participated in the program were working while only 35% of the 29 who had not participated were working. (SN)

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A WORK-EXPERIENCE PROGRAM
FOR SLOW LEARNING YOUTH

A Report of A Three Year
Extension and Improvement Project
of the
Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation
entitled
Vocational Rehabilitation of the
Mentally Retarded in the Dayton
Public Secondary Schools

Issued by

E. E. HOLT
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Ohio Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio

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by

Hoyt McPherson, Dayton Public Schools

and

Thomas M. Stephens, Ohio Department of Education

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Prepared under the direction of

E. J. Moriarty
Director, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

and

R. A. Horn
Director, Division of Special Education
Columbus, Ohio
1964

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F O R E W O R D

In 1959 Dr. E. E. Holt, Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction, was a member of a Governor's Committee on Mental Retardation which, among other recommendations, advocated "increased staffing and collaboration between the Division of Special Education and the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation" to effect improvement in the vocational rehabilitation of the educable mentally retarded -- those with intelligence quotients in the 50-75 range.

Thereafter, in 1960, representatives of the Division and Bureau became members of a Continuing Inter-Departmental Committee which had the task of trying to carry out some of the recommendations of the parent committee. This Committee soon put high priority on the proposal of the directors of these agencies that a demonstration of the feasibility and value of a work-school program would make a real contribution.

At that time only 205 of Ohio's 1,113 school districts had "slow learner" classes -- and only 36 of these had defined programs for the retarded at the high school level. Just five of these had experience with a work-school or co-op activity as part of their programs. Except for a large well-organized program in Cincinnati, these efforts were either new or very small, or both. The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation had increased its staff in the 1958-59 biennium and was increasing the numbers of mentally retarded in its case loads, but too few of its mentally retarded clients had any of the concepts, good work

habits and other beneficial effects which accrue from school programs and curriculums tailored to their needs. The result was that Bureau counselors usually had to "start from scratch" making their task most difficult and the results of their efforts, in too many cases, unsuccessful.

Because of demonstrated interest in the problem and steady development of program in this area since 1946, the Dayton Public Schools were a logical locale for a demonstration. When approached about it, they were enthusiastic.

The result was a three-year Extension and Improvement Project of the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation which is described in some detail in this report. It was successful -- and it will remain on a permanent basis as a continuing and expanding part of the Dayton Public Schools' program. It is our hope and belief that it will encourage similar efforts elsewhere.

We are grateful to and highly commend the Dayton Board of Education as represented by Harold Boda, Assistant Superintendent; William Beitzel, Director of Special Education; and Hoyt McPherson, Coordinator of the Project, for their unflagging zeal, their enthusiasm and their imagination in recognizing and solving the many problems which occurred from day to day. And we are proud of the real contributions of Orin Davis, Assistant Director and John Gephart, Dayton Supervisor of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation; and Miss Amy Allen, Educational Specialist of the Ohio Division of Special Education, to its success.

Raymond A. Horn, Director
Division of Special Education
Ohio Department of Education

Edward J. Moriarty, Director
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation
Ohio Department of Education

The Setting

What type of community can support a work-experience program for slow learning students? What supportive services and provisions should a school district have? What kind of jobs can these students obtain? How smooth will the transitions from school to work be for such students?

These are some of the questions which confronted the Dayton Public Schools as consideration was given to planning this work-experience project.

Dayton, Ohio

Dayton is situated in southwestern Ohio. It is the county seat and largest city in Montgomery County. About 50% of the total population of Montgomery County is within the city limits. Two universities are in the county. The Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is located in the Dayton area.

Of the more than 500,000 Montgomery County residents, 198,000 were employed in August, 1963. Unemployment, at that time, was 3.4% as compared to 6.4% for the entire nation.

There are more than 8,900 business establishments in the Dayton area, contributing an annual payroll of 1 billion, 136 million dollars. Retail and service type businesses account for more than one-half the firms. While, an additional 765 companies are essentially manufacturing in nature.

The general economic picture, since 1961, has been one of growth. In the three year period, more than 232 million dollars have been added to the payrolls.

Dayton Public Schools

The Dayton Public School District consists of 53 elementary schools, 11 high schools, two special schools, the Dayton School of Practical Nursing and the Dayton Public Night School. Over 2,300 staff members are directly concerned with supervision and instruction. The clerical and maintenance operations and cafeteria employees number 625.

The physical limits of the Dayton City School District extend into areas beyond the corporate limits of the city.

Special schools and classes are provided for children whose handicaps or individual differences indicate that regular classes can not meet their needs. Currently, the Dayton Board of Education provides 38 classes for slow learners in 26 elementary schools; and 30 classes in 6 high schools. There are over 1,100 children in these classes -- 624 at the secondary level. These classes are under the direction of the Supervisor of Special Education.

There have been classes for slow learning children (I.Q. 50-75) in the Dayton schools since 1946. The interim has reflected a steady growth, initially at the elementary level. More recently, since 1955, emphasis has been on providing for the slow-learning adolescent at the secondary level. The subsequent growth of classes and the modified academic program however, was not felt to meet fully the needs of these young people. The program led to graduation. It was observed, however, that even with a diploma the recipients were not getting and holding jobs after they entered the community as young adults. In an industrialized city, it was considered difficult at best for all children to make the transition from school to the world of work. It was logically conceded to be extremely more difficult for the slow child. The type of program needed by these children would provide more support throughout the modified academic program and ultimately lead to occupational training and finally job placement.

The approach to the development of such a program, in the Dayton schools, recognized the joint responsibility of the community and the school. The result was the development of a school-community vocational training and placement program. The community would afford training opportunities and the schools would study the problems of the trainee on the job, and assist and support him. The optimal time to give such assistance and support appeared to be while the child was still in a school program, prior to graduation.

The Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation acknowledged a legal responsibility to provide vocational rehabilitation services to adults who were vocationally handicapped due to mental retardation and who needed and could profit from such services. It recognized, however, the impossibility of dealing with all the educable retarded individuals in Ohio, as they reached employable age, on a one-to-one basis. It believed that the schools, by a redefinition of the meaning of "education" as it applied to slow learners, would be successful in preparing the great majority to get and keep jobs. A small number of slow learners could not be rehabilitated through even the best kind of school program and would need the skills of vocational rehabilitation counselors.

The Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation had experienced professionals on its Dayton staff. Through their cooperation and the cooperation of other community agencies and the Dayton schools, the project was inaugurated in August, 1960.

The Work Experience Program

The administration of the work-experience program was the sole responsibility of a coordinator in the Department of Special Education of the Dayton Public Schools. Each high school that contained special classes for slow-learners had a teacher-counselor who assisted the coordinator. The teacher-counselor consolidated and coordinated the efforts of all interested people in his school towards the objectives of the program. Each counselor devoted two and one half days weekly to the supervision of the trainees.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

A Citizens' Advisory Committee was organized when the project began. It consisted of 26 leading business men, labor representatives, and members of the Ohio State Employment Service.

The committee was organized to communicate with business and industry and to gain their support for the program. Since many of the members represented large business and manufacturing concerns, their function was not designed to provide jobs for the program. Rather their public, personal, and organizational endorsement helped develop community acceptance. It was felt that acceptance by top labor and management was necessary for the initiation and continuation of the project.

The committee continues to meet once each year in order to receive a report of the project's operation. In this way, it

lends public support, by reputation.

Very few of the organizations, represented by the Advisory Committee, actually participated in the training program. This was not inconsistent with the purposes of the project. The factors of size, complexity, employment practices, and degree of organization in large industries tended to make it difficult to utilize these as training centers.

Technical Advisory Committee

A Technical Advisory Committee served to help administer the project. The committee was comprised of one member from the Ohio Division of Special Education, two members of the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and two members from the Dayton Public Schools.

This committee functioned as a legislative body, regulating and controlling the operations of the project to assure that it conformed to an agreement between the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Dayton Public Schools and the educational standards of the Ohio Department of Education. Such conformity was essential to assure that the activities of the participants were commensurate with the requirements for high school graduation in the State of Ohio. In addition, the aggregate professional experience of the members was combined during the meetings to adjust the operational procedures of the project to the needs of slow learning adolescents.

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Dayton has one of the two offices in District III of Ohio BVR. The Bureau's Dayton office is responsible for program in seven counties with a population of over 900,000. A District Supervisor, headquartered in Cincinnati, visits the office weekly to consult with its five professional staff members, one of whom serves as Supervisor of the office as well as a Counselor for a limited case load.

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation maintained both a supportive and functional role in the project. The supportive role consisted of an "Extension and Improvement Project Grant", as provided by Federal and State law, covering the cost of the administration of the program. This grant was for the period September, 1960, through June, 1963. The functional role was assumed by the Dayton office of BVR. It provided additional services to students with special needs. Such services included prosthesis, evaluation and placement of the severely and multiply handicapped, and substantially increased the scope of the total program.

The program staff, during the course of the grant, was under the direction of the local office of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Students defined as candidates for the program became clients of that office. All information and material pertinent to their subsequent activity was assigned to BVR files, retained in the offices of the program coordinator, at the Dayton Board of Education. Upon selection and assignment to work-training, such information was forwarded to the Super-

visor of the Dayton office of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. All subsequent data pertinent to the client's occupational activities were forwarded to that office.

The Supervisor of Dayton's BVR office and the program coordinator met periodically to review the progress of the total program and to consider special referrals of candidates for whom additional services and special assistance would be beneficial.

Trainees who became BVR clients were carried through to permanent post-school placement and closure. The effectiveness of this method, bringing potential adult clients to the attention of the Bureau in advance of the termination of their public school training, was considered to reduce greatly later caseload and resulted in early closure.

Program Coordinator

A coordinator was employed by the Dayton Board of Education and was administratively responsible to the Supervisor of Special Education. His primary responsibility was the development of a work-school program. He maintained liaison among the schools and the Ohio Division of Special Education, the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and industry. He contacted prospective employers to determine the types of jobs available to slow learners in the high schools and conferred with school teacher-counselors in order to select pupils who had job qualifications. Job placement was made by the coordinator. Supervision of pupils who were on the jobs was the joint responsibility of the coordinator and the teacher-counselors. In addition, he

served as secretary of the Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

Teacher-Counselors

Teacher-counselors served as direct contacts with the trainees. Their responsibilities included referring qualified students to the coordinator for job placement and counseling the participants in work and school related matters.

One of their key functions was the "pay-day interview." At this time each student's financial status was discussed, including matters of budgeting to defray the immediate costs of working and banking a portion of each pay check. The participant's socio-economic background, immediate financial needs, and emotional stability determined the nature and extent of each interview.

Another aspect of the teacher-counselors' roles involved interpreting the work-experience program to eligible students. They also had to maintain an understanding and appreciation of the values of the program in order to communicate these to the total school faculty.

Control of the activities of young adults on the job and in the community was found to be very necessary to an organized work experience program if it was to be maintained as part of an acceptable curriculum. This was the shared responsibility of the teacher-counselor and the parents of the participating students. Without the cooperative efforts of the parents, the continuing efforts of the teacher-counselor were largely wasted.

Parent orientation and counseling became primary responsibilities for the counselors.

One of the expressed purposes of this project was to provide realistic experiences for slow learning adolescents within an educational framework which led to high school graduation. Another responsibility of the teacher-counselors was to make certain that such credit was awarded. Credits for time on the job, performance and attendance in academic classes, evaluation of occupational adjustment, accumulation of necessary units for graduation were the ultimate responsibilities of these counselors.

Scheduling classes for students participating in the work-training program was a continuous problem. No general policy resolved the individual aspects of trainees arriving and departing from academic classes in accord with the demands of a wide variety of employers. All students participating were not placed at the beginning of school in September. There was no assurance that those placed would continue in their original capacities until the close of school in June. The resolution of these scheduling problems was effected largely through close working relationships between building principals and teacher-counselors.

Initially, it was difficult for instructors, in academic areas, to accept the responsibility of awarding grades to trainees in their respective subject areas for time spent in on-the-job training. To resolve this problem, grades in all

subject areas for students absent for all, or part, of a grading period were posted by the teacher-counselor in the building.

Detention for infraction of school rules (tardy, unexcused absence) imposed a unique problem in light of the realistic philosophy of the program -- "the employee's obligation to the job is primary and inviolate". All discipline was administered by the teacher-counselor, at the demand of the school administration.

Participants were encouraged to participate in as many activities as possible when not in conflict with a specific work assignment. The only serious conflicts resulted from potential trainees electing to participate in competitive athletics (football, basketball, track). Work-training always precluded the possibility of participation in seasonal competitive sports. The potential trainee was given every opportunity and encouragement to select work-training placement. The choice remained his. Of the six cases contacted, in the post-school population who elected to participate in competitive sports, one made an immediate occupational adjustment as a result of his athletic prowess. Five seemingly failed to realize any benefit, and are currently unemployed.

Acceptance of the philosophy and mechanics of a work-study program by school principals largely determined the progress of the program. Such administrative acceptance predicates acceptance by the total school faculty and the students. In those schools where acceptance was not spontaneous, the program failed.

Employers

Employers held a position of singular significance to the organization and operation of this project. Without their cooperation, this program would have failed. There would have been no real places in which to train, no field experiences, and few facts to report. It is no exaggeration to state that the employer constituted the hub about which all activity revolved.

A generalization of what constituted a suitable employer is not possible. The term "employer" in this report refers to different aspects of every training situation. One meaning of "employer" relates to the people who served as the students' immediate supervisors -- the people in direct contact with the trainees on the job. These people willingly cooperated to help develop the trainees into competent workers. Many of the supervisors demonstrated an understanding of the limitations of slow learners through daily contacts.

People functioning in behalf of employing establishments in supervisory capacities must be willing to train a young person to perform a specific job. Eventually, he must develop an awareness of the unique characteristics of the individual trainee.

Motivation of employers and their supervisory personnel was a factor to be considered. It differs markedly from the factors which motivate school administrators and teachers. Employing establishments are motivated by profit, efficiency, and effectiveness. The immediate supervisor in any organization is responsible to his superior for these characteristics in his

occupational setting. The first consideration of this project, therefore, was to provide a "potentially profitable" employee to fill an actual job need. The program was "sold" to the employer on the basis of this mutual advantage to the establishment and the client.

The operation of the program was dictated by the needs of the employer. Hours of employment, length of work week, and time of work were made to conform to the requests of the firms in which the jobs were available. Originally, the program was structured in terms of school requirements. It was soon apparent that such a method of operation was incompatible with the real needs of employers.

The other aspect of every training situation is the job. Aside from the specific characteristics of each job, there were some aspects of every work situation that warrant consideration.

Successful placement and continuance appeared to be correlated negatively with the size and complexity of the organizational structure of the employing agency. The training, supervision, and ultimate placement of the clients in this program were more successful in the smaller organizations. The objectives of the program, and the trainees, had a tendency to get lost in the rigidly structured personnel policies of large manufacturing concerns.

Union organized establishments resisted hiring the clients of this program. The stigma of "Mental Retardation" elicited unique anxieties from labor and management. Labor bewailed an

obligation to their existing unemployed; management decried a fear of promotion by seniority alone.

A significant number of those students who graduated onto their training jobs, stepped directly from these entry-type jobs to semi-skilled occupations in these very 'objecting' organized industries. The stigma of "mental retardation" is acquired by school label. It is shed by adult self-sufficiency. Further research into the effects of this stigma would be of value to future training and placement efforts.

Little, if any, transfer of training from one employing agency to another, in the same occupational capacity, has been observed. The characteristics of attrition, thus far observed, indicated that only one client was terminated because the employer felt he was unable to master effectively the routine and skills. Consequently, trainees were not provided with opportunities for a variety of work experiences in unskilled capacities. Rather, efforts were made to fit a participant to a job which would provide satisfaction to both the client and the employer.

All jobs differed to some degree. Problems related to a given work situation can be generalized only from the point of view of their single common characteristic -- people. There remains, always, in any program this uncontrolled variable. Some informal experimentation was carried out during the course of this program that would indicate the need for more intensive research into the cause, nature, and effect of interpersonal relations upon youth in the world of work. This variable has been observed to work with equal impartiality to the advantage and

disadvantage of the persons involved.

Observations of this phenomenon in unskilled (low skill demand and prestige) categories lead to the need for matching persons to persons, instead of persons to jobs.

Training and Employment

Students assigned work-training were placed on jobs in the community with cooperative employers. An attempt was made to inform the employers of the limitations and capabilities of these students. The jobs involved in these assignments were real. They were not created by well-meaning persons who wished to help. Special concessions in work demands and wages are equally artificial and were not in evidence in this program. Each student was expected to meet the same job demands that would be required of any other employee. The occupational environment was never altered to meet the needs of the trainee because the objectives of this program were to assist the young adult in adjusting to the world of work as it existed.

Unskilled jobs requiring a minimum amount of training were sought in the community. Those places of employment involving direct personal services to the consumer proved to be the most frequent source.

Food Services

Fifty per cent of the assignments were in food service areas. These jobs were located in public and industrial cafeterias.

The high turn-over, as a result of relatively low hourly rates and inconvenient hours, in these occupations provided a ready source of jobs. This program offered to the employer a reduction in personnel turn-over and assurance of a source of additional manpower as needed.

Porter and Custodial Services

Approximately thirty per cent of the assignments were porter and custodial. Porter service refers to assignments in department and grocery stores. These usually consisted of simple stock maintenance, carry-out service, and runner or messenger service. Custodial service included assignments to building maintenance under the supervision of a full-time, qualified custodian.

The major differences between these two types of employment were in working hours and remuneration. Most custodial jobs were in the evening hours and provided the highest wages. Porter service jobs were available during the normal working day at minimum wages.

Gasoline Stations

Service stations proved to be of least value for job placements. In many cases, too much responsibility was given to the trainee without regard for his limitations.

Attrition rates were high because of dissatisfaction on the part of employers and employees. Lack of understanding, cooperation, and supervision on the part of the employers were

the primary reasons for job failures. Service stations are no longer used as potential training situations.

Hospitals

Hospitals were one of the last sources of jobs used in the programs. They developed rapidly as places for employment. There is reason to believe that hospitals will eventually become the largest single employing group. The variety of unskilled opportunities in large hospitals and the exceedingly high turn-over rate in personnel among adults have resulted in these becoming an excellent job source.

Child-Care and Domestic Work

Work in private homes, without constant and adequate supervision, proved to be questionable learning situations. Opportunities for exploitation were in evidence. Without adequate supervision, young female trainees had to assume responsibilities beyond their levels of understanding.

Post-School Job Placement

The final objective of the work-training program was a permanent job for the student upon graduation. This objective was used as the measure of success for the program. If upon graduation the student was not hired by the participating employer, assistance in securing employment was provided through the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Ohio State Employment Service.

Eighty-one of the students in the program were retained by their employers upon graduation. An additional twelve students obtained other jobs through the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Ohio State Employment Service.

Successful training and ultimate placement were closely related to the amount of on-the-job supervision provided during the training period. It was the supervision provided by the employer and the school that differentiated the work-experience program from simply job placement. The school was involved in an educational process through the supervisory aspects of the program.

The program personnel were acquainted with and had immediate access to the supervisor in each employing agency. Whenever possible, problems of job adjustment were handled quickly in order to avoid recurrence. Understanding and cooperative employers were essential. Because of clear channels of communication between the employer and the program personnel, most job problems were brought to the attention of the work coordinator.

Personal Problems of the Students

Guidance in the personal affairs of the money-earner was one of the services provided by the work-coordinator. Each participant in the program was required to report to his counselor as soon after his pay day as was possible. During these contacts, help in money management was provided. The importance of this was reflected by the combined income of all participants. The annual gross earnings were approximately

$118,000.00.

Discussions of problems relating to the job and the personal life of the student occurred during these counseling sessions. The importance of frequent and consistent supervision cannot be over-emphasized. It was observed that even a single exception in the regularity of the contact often resulted in problems to both the student and the employer.

Participants

Participants eligible for the program were all eleventh and twelfth grade students currently enrolled in bona fide special education classes for slow learners in the Dayton Public High Schools. There were 215 students participating in the program as of June, 1963. Of this total, 138 were eleventh graders -- 105 boys and 33 girls. The twelfth grade consisted of 47 boys and 30 girls. The mean chronological age of the group was 18 years and 6 months. The range of I.Q. scores, as measured by individual tests, was from 52 to 82, with a mean of 73.

Trainees were selected from those students who had been participating in the program for slow learners. An attempt was made to predict the success of those participants who were selected for training on four criteria.

An investigation between I.Q. and job success was made. The greatest percentage of job success was sustained by those students within the 65 to 74 I.Q. range. Trainees with I.Q.

scores between 75 and 82 showed the greatest amount of failure. While only two trainees were in the 52 to 54 I.Q. range, both were successful on the job. On the basis of this study, I.Q. alone does not appear to be a consistent criterion for predicting job success.

No relationship was found between chronological age and job success. Age, as a criterion for predicting success seemed to be related to the legal restrictions for the employment of minors. Because of the job requirements, students below the age of eighteen are now less frequently selected for placement.

Academic achievement was studied as a possible criterion for job success. Stanford achievement test scores on 28 twelfth grade students were compared with job success. No significant difference was found between those students who were successful on the job and those who were not.

Teachers were asked to rate students on the basis of twelve characteristics prior to work experience. They proved to be more accurate in predicting job success than job failure. Their inability to forecast job failure may have been related to the rating scale.

The four factors which were considered as possible predictors of job success -- I.Q., age, academic achievement, and teacher judgment, proved to be of limited value. Little relationship was found between success on the job and I.Q. or age and academic achievement. Teacher judgment was more predictive of job success than any of the other criteria.

Job placement was, initially, on a trial and error basis. Minimum requirements included grade placement, chronological age, and evidence of maturity sufficient to handle the job. After three years of experience with the program, no criteria have emerged to replace those which were originally used.

Problems of Job Adjustment

An entirely smooth transition from school to job is seldom accomplished by the best of workers. Invariably, minor and some major problems of job adjustment occurred among the students in this project.

Trainees who could not make a satisfactory adjustment in a job situation were returned to full-time school attendance. Students who experienced job failure seemed to have no distinguishing characteristics. No differences were found which could be attributed to chronological age, I.Q., or academic achievement.

Reasons for job removal fell into two general categories: 1. external circumstances which resulted in termination of training, 2. poor attitudes on the part of the participants.

External circumstances referred to elimination of jobs due to business conditions (10 students); undesirable work associates (2 students); excessive work requirements (2 students); insufficient pay (1 student); and job complexity (1 student).

Attitudinal deficiencies included poor work habits (8 students); school drop-outs (7 students); and poor personal habits (7 students). Two students left their jobs for undetermined reasons.

In all, 41 students who were assigned job experiences subsequently were removed and not reassigned to the program. Of these, 19 eventually left school. Seven made satisfactory adjustments outside the scope of the program. Others married, took full-time jobs, joined the army, or moved to other communities.

Employment of Graduates

A follow-up study was conducted in order to determine if employment of students in the work-experience program was higher than for other slow learners who had no work-experience. A total of 73 students, who had graduated from the program for slow learners, were followed.

Of the total, 44 students had participated in the work-experience phase of the program. The remaining 29 students had graduated from the program for slow learners but had not been involved in the work-experience part of the program. The two groups were equated on the basis of I.Q., sex, chronological age, and length of time in the community since graduation.

Of those who had work-experience, 89% (39 students) had jobs at the time of the follow-up study. They had been employed 87% of the time since graduation. It had taken an average of one month from graduation to the time they had obtained their first jobs.

Only 35% of those students (10 students) who had no work-experience were employed at the time of the study. They had been employed 24% of the time since graduation. Members of

this group took an average of 8 months to find employment following graduation from high school.

Conclusions and Implications

This report contains the results of a three-year project sponsored by the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Dayton Public Schools, and the Ohio Division of Special Education. The primary purpose of the project was to develop a work-experience program for slow learning high school students.

Those conclusions and implications which can be drawn should only be related to this specific project, although there is reason to believe that many of the implications and some of the conclusions can be generalized to other communities and school programs.

Conclusions

1. Many job opportunities were found in the Dayton community which proved suitable for slow learning high school students. The jobs were all in the unskilled service areas. Food service, porter and custodial occupations, and hospital work were the primary sources used for the work-experience.

2. Large factories were found to be unsuitable for job placements. The complexity of operations, personnel practices, and union concerns all mitigated against utilizing these firms.

3. Domestic work in private homes and gasoline stations were also found to be of questionable value. The lack of supervision in such places was the major reason for their inadequacies.

4. Attempts were made to seek criteria for identifying students most likely to be successful. Measurements which were used included I.Q. scores, achievement test results, and teacher ratings. None of these proved to be predictive of job success. Although teachers were able to select students who became successful workers, they were not able to discriminate job failures from those who were successful.

5. Slow learning students who participated in the work-experience program were compared with slow learners who did not have work-experience. The results clearly demonstrated that the graduates of the work-experience program were able to acquire jobs shortly after graduation and to continue to be employed for a longer period of time than those students who did not have the benefit of work-experience.

6. While the majority of the jobs were in the unskilled areas of employment, the aggregate annual gross earnings of the students approximated $118,000.00. Because of the earning power of the students, guidance in money management soon became necessary.

7. The work-coordinator, at the central office level, found it possible to work with other community agencies when necessary. It was apparent that the program required the cooperation of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Ohio State Employment Service, business and labor leaders.

8. Building principals were essential to the success of the program. They had to be willing to modify school practices

and accept work-experience as a legitimate part of the curriculum. Teachers tended to accept the program when their principals supported it.

9. Potential employees should be presented to employers because they are capable of meeting the job demands. Employers should not be asked to accept the participants on the basis of sympathy for the students.

10. The participants should be expected to meet the same demands of the job as are all other employees. They should be paid the same wages for their work that other employees obtain.

11. Counselors who understand slow learning youth should be available in the high schools. They should guide the students in money management matters, consult with employers and parents, and explain the program to the faculty members.

12. The "pay-day interview" proved to be an important aspect of the counselors' roles. Through these interviews the students were helped to become wise consumers and learn the value of saving.

Implications

1. Curriculum for slow learning students should include job oriented instruction.

2. Positive attitudes toward work should be introduced to the students at the primary levels.

3. Information about realistic job opportunities should be a significant part of the curriculum. The students should have first-hand experiences with potential employing establishments.

4. Because of the importance of transportation for employment, the students should learn early the use of public transportation facilities and whenever possible should take driver-education prior to entering the work-experience program.

5. There is reason to believe that slow learning students will have persistent money management problems. Post-graduation assistance should be provided by the work-experience staff.

6. Money management can best be taught to slow learning students at each pay period.

7. The work-coordinator should be on duty throughout the summer months to assist students who have job and money-management problems.

8. A total program for slow learning students should begin in the primary grades and should be culminated by experience in the world of work.

A P P E N D I X I

A TEACHER-COUNSELOR

LOOKS AT THE

WORK-EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The student usually asks the question: "Can I graduate and work at the same time?" If he is assured that he can graduate then he is concerned about whether or not he will be able to continue on his job after graduation.

There is the problem of acquiring certain status symbols. They feel compelled to buy class rings. When working, some make an unrealistic purchase of class pictures which often cost as much as seventy or eighty dollars.

These students have a desire to return to school on their days off. Returning to school often creates problems, for the student and for the school administrators. Problems often arise because teachers are under the impression that these students are working and they are marking them as "excused absence". The teachers then see them in the halls.

These youngsters need a great deal of guidance in getting along with fellow employees who are usually adults. Often our students feel that they are being worked too hard as compared to those who are working around them. They must learn to do what is required of them regardless of what their fellow employees are doing. Guidance must also be applied in the area of helping them to understand that the same rules which apply to other employees also apply to them. They must realize that, even if they are students, their work habits and conduct will be evaluated in the same manner as are other employees.

There is a need for a great deal of counseling in terms of money problems. In cases where youngsters work and their parents lose support money from a welfare agency, these stu-

dents feel obligated to reimburse the parents for the loss of their support. A great deal of counseling is needed in this area. The parents and the students meet with us and come to some agreement that is fair to the student and the parent.

There is a tendency for the students to be overly generous in giving money to their parents. Often money is given to parents who are not really in need. Parents who take money from their working children seem to fall into two general categories. Some want to share their newly found prosperity, thereby getting additional money to buy personal items for themselves. Others attempt to instill character and respect by obligating their son or daughter to pay a weekly amount for room and board. The problem of youngsters pouring unnecessary sums of money into the family situation is usually corrected after a conference with the parents.

There has been evidence of positive growth in our work program, partly as a result of cordial personal contacts and a greater amount of communications with employers, school administrators, parents and working students.

Herbert Carroll

Teacher-Counselor

A P P E N D I X II

REPORTS ON

INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' MONEY

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

H

H Has been employed as a custodial trainee by the Board of Education since January, 1963. He co-ops six weeks on and six weeks off. General assignment: _____ Elementary School, however, H 's industry and energy have resulted in his being called back on relief, with our permission, for various assignments by the custodial staff in the absence of regular employees. H 's net income this year is well over one thousand dollars. He has not yet organized a savings plan. He is the most flagrant illustration of our failure to properly supervise, yet encountered.

H accounts for his expenditures on a bi-weekly basis as follows: A five dollar payment on furniture; thirty dollars for board into the home; eight dollars for gasoline; four dollars for lunch; five dollars for cigarettes -- total fifty two dollars. In addition, he has a one hundred and fifty dollar lien against his car for repairs on the transmission and has a sixty-five dollar insurance premium. When it was pointed out to him that with his payments he still has thirty-one dollars of each check unaccounted for, he stated, "I can't believe it." He was surprised that leakage had accounted for over three hundred and fifty dollars of his earnings since he began working.

H is a very intense, industrious, and conscientious young man but his reactions to unfamiliar situations reflect poor judgment. He has been in the coordinator's office on

several previous occasions seeking help and advice in coping with his immediate supervisor. His seeking help is commendable but a continued need for close support is indicated.

What is most questionable is this young man's stated obligation to the support of his family whom, he claims, are completely indigent. This conference was followed by a call from the mother who was endeavoring to be assured that there would be no reduction in the amount of support that H contributed. The mother claims that both she and her husband are invalids and their total net income is a hundred and eight dollars a month. She stated that were it not for the income from this program, H would be forced to leave school and find work to support the family.

An understanding of H leads one to believe that this would be his wish, too. The visiting teacher serving his school area has been requested to investigate the home situation for possible eligibility for further welfare or relief. No further disposition of this case will be made subsequent to a future interview with H .

O

O was assigned work training at _____ in September, 1963. He co-ops with another boy six weeks on and six weeks back in school. His stated hourly rate is $1.95½. O 's take home pay bi-weekly is a hundred and twenty dollars. Of this amount, he claims to save twenty dollars out of each check in the _____ Credit Union. He pays his mother between twenty and thirty dollars. He pays eleven dollars, every other month, on a sewing machine. The cost of gasoline, in a two week period for the car his father gave him, is four dollars.

Considering incidental expenses, this young man can account for about sixty out of every one hundred and twenty dollars, and doesn't seem to be aware of what is happening to the rest of it. When it was pointed out to him that perhaps the forty-five to sixty dollars a month that he is giving to his mother might be a little high, he simply stated that he thought it might be nice to pay them back. At this point, he was asked if he felt that money would ever repay his parents and his reply was "of course not". He was commended for his sincere, if somewhat exaggerated, feeling of responsibility to the home, and it was agreed that perhaps five dollars a week would be sufficient as a gesture of his responsibility.

The accurate disposition of five hundred dollars that he has earned since September has yet to be determined. O was

advised to return to the coordinator's office with his credit union pass book to verify the amount that he has saved and to further discuss his future plans. He failed to keep the appointment. This was a particularly bitter day and public schools were closed but it is interesting to note that a number of other young people were able to keep their appointments on that day. O is a very conscientious and intense young man who presents a nice appearance and from the evaluation report seems to be making satisfactory progress on the job.

G

G is of very small stature, passive, and highly motivated to please adults. He gives an appearance of physical and emotional immaturity.

G has been employed at _____ Hospital for the past two months from 9:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. at an hourly rate of $1.25.

He has a poor understanding of the relationship between his work-training and education. He is concerned with how he can get credit in school for the time he has spent on the job. He is genuinely concerned about school success although not very realistic considering his age and grade status. He feels that he has learned a great deal on the job but feels he can learn much more at school. When questioned about the importance of academics in his occupational setting, he stated he used math in counting at the hospital. He also recognized that he was learning to work with other people and that he was getting job experience.

Inasmuch as G was recently assigned this work-training station, it was not expected that he would have accumulated much money in the bank. The regularity of his savings is commendable. However, in December he loaned his father $40.00 out of the $50.00 that he had saved because, "he was behind on the rent." He states this loan was with the approval of his counselor. When asked what his father would have done had he not

been fortunate enough to be working at this time and had fifty dollars in the bank, he did not respond. He simply claimed his father needed the money. Upon further investigation, it was ascertained that he had signed a contract for approximately fifteen months of Karate Instruction at $21.00 a month. It was necessary, at that time, that his father co-sign with him. When asked how he could possibly commit himself to this amount prior to the time that he was in the occupational training program and at the time when he had no assured income, he was unable to comment. It is our feeling that his father probably was more concerned with his contractual commitment than he was with the rent.

From all standpoints, he is a true retardate and will require a considerable amount of supervision during the course of the next two or three years. His primary asset is his sincere motivation to succeed in this program. His intensity to please could be commendable if well directed.

D

D was assigned work-training at _____ in September, 1963. He is a well built young man, with a moderate speech problem and fair appearance. He works from four to nine, Monday thru Friday, and sometimes from four to ten on Saturday, on call.

His hourly rate is ninety-five cents. His gross pay would be about $23.75 per week for a five-day week, exclusive of over-time. He claims net income of $17.05, which means that he has deductions of $8.70, which seems to be extremely high and questionable. However, he may be docked one hour per day for meals. This has to be verified.

His savings pattern was very commendable. He made deposits every pay period usually in the amount of five dollars, sometimes ten, and once fifteen. However, it was disturbing to note that he almost depleted his savings account the latter part of December, in order to lend his father $65.00. He claims this was justifiable inasmuch as his father was ill and he needed it to help pay the rent. Of course, this claim is not in line with the policy of the program. We expect parents to do in an emergency whatever they would have done had their children not been employed. Since this is history it is overlooked, but it is hoped that it will not be recurrent.

L

L presents a good appearance. He seemed to be tense and nervous and extremely anxious to please during the course of the interview. He is currently employed as a stock boy in a wholesale wallpaper company. He has been there for two and a half years. He obtained the job himself. L appears to be fairly confident as far as his concept of himself in his occupational setting is concerned. He works from one to five each day receiving compensatory time off from school. His hourly rate is a dollar and a quarter.

L acknowledges an understanding of the relationship between his job and the classroom setting. His only objection to the program at this time is the inconvenience of reporting to the coordinator's office. His net pay is approximately $40.00 to $45.00 every two weeks. His stated expenses, every two weeks, are five dollars personal expense money. He also pays $11.50 every two weeks for a refrigerator and a couch payment. He states that his father is employed with a heating company and makes approximately $65.00 per week during the building season and less during the off season. He stands firm in his claim that if he does not continue the payments on the refrigerator and the couch each month, the family will lose these two items. He implies that both items were purchased as a result of his earning power in the work-training program.

He receives his next pay check on Wednesday, January the fifteenth, and agrees to return to the coordinator's office

on Thursday the sixteenth, when he will bank eight dollars. His bank account reflects regular deposits from May through October. No deposits were made in November or December. There were considerable withdrawals from the account in the period May through October. He should have been able to bank approximately twenty dollars every other week. His regularity in banking is commendable, but apparently he lacks guidance.

In light of evidence of his cooperative attitude, it is anticipated that he will conform to the requirements of the program, within the limits of his capabilities, and progress to graduation on this job. His claim to the effect that he has earned over $1,100.00 this year is not consistent with his bank balance. His maximum anticipated savings, during the time he has been under the auspices of the program, should be in excess of $360.00.

C

C is employed by _____, Inc., Thursdays and Fridays as a carryout and package boy. C immediately impresses one with his intensity and his sincerity. He creates an unusual air of maturity for a fifteen year old. He makes a very good first impression and should be kept in mind as a replacement at _____ possibly next fall.

C has been working every week-end for the past three months under the auspices of this program. This is his first counseling interview. When questioned about his money, he stated that he had never been asked by anyone to open a savings account. Initially, there was some evidence of resentment. It dissipated when it was pointed out to him that it would be to his advantage to be able to save some money. He readily agreed and then gave an account of his expenditures to date. He saved regularly from his eleven dollars and sixty cents a week pay, giving the money to his mother until he had accumulated fifty dollars. He then had dental work at a cost of forty-eight dollars. He was commended for his industry and his wise use of his funds. He purchased a bicycle on which he still owes twenty-five dollars, paying at the rate of one dollar and twenty-five cents per week. He was not certain as to when he actually purchased it. There is a break down when it comes to a concept of time with this young man, but he said he would check with his mother to see if it was paid for yet or how much longer he

had to pay on it. He states he can get by on five or six dollars a week for transportation and meals and incidental expenses. He readily agreed to bank five dollars every week.

C expressed some resentment that his bank book would have to be kept in the central office instead of at home. He accepted the directive, without resistance, when it was explained to him that he must come to this office and get his bank book on pay day, take it to his bank, and return the book here, all in the same day. He stated that it was inconvenient. It was explained to him that it would be expedient and convenient if he transferred the savings account to the bank across the street from the Board of Education because no exception would be made to this rule. He still stipulated that he wished to continue his account where it was because it was close to his home.

Difficulty may be avoided if we remind this young man that he is not to withdraw his money under any circumstances without prior approval, subject to dismissal from work. He is to return January 9 at 1:00 P.M.

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Supervisor, Special Education
Dayton City Schools

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Dayton Urban League

H. L. Boda . . . . Chairman
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Dayton City Schools

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Ohio State Employment Service

James L. McCoy
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